

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 05561 150518Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 H-01 AID-05 IGA-02 ACDA-07

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /070 W

-----150734Z 034025 /11

R 150420Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0076

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 5561

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, TH

SUBJECT: FUTURE OF GRANT MAP

REF: STATE 55607 (NOTAL)

1. ALTHOUGH THE EXACT TIMING OF THE CESSATION OF MAP FOR THAILAND HAS NOT BEEN DISCUSSED, WE BELIEVE TOP RTG OFFICIALS AND MILITARY HAVE BEEN PSYCHOLOGICALLY PREPARED FOR THE EVENTUAL TERMINATION OF GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE FOR SOME TIME. PRIMARILY THROUGH THE ALMOST DAILY WORKING CONTACTS BETWEEN JUSMAGTHAI REPRESENTATIVES AND THAI MILITARY OFFICERS AT ALL LEVELS, THE MESSAGE THAT GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE WAS LIKELY TO END WORLDWIDE HAS BEEN DELIVERED TO THE THAI. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THEY ARE PLEASED OVER THE PROSPECTS OR WILL NOT EXPRESS THEIR DISMAY WHEN THE WORD IS GIVEN. BUT THEY ARE NOT IGNORANT OF THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION, HOWEVER MUCH THEY HOPE AGAINST HOPE THAT THEY MAY, IN THE END, GAIN SOME REPRIEVE.

2. IN OUR JUDGMENT, THE CRITICAL FACTOR IS THAT IT NOT APPEAR THAT THAILAND IS BEING SINGLED OUT FOR EXCLUSION
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 05561 150518Z

FROM ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS WHICH CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE FOR OTHER COUNTRIES. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, TERMINATION OF GRANT ASSISTANCE TO THAILAND WOULD BE READ AS A CLEAR SIGNAL BY THAILAND AND PROBABLY ALSO BY ITS ASEAN PARTNERS THAT, DESPITE WHATEVER PUBLIC UTTERANCES WE MAY CHOOSE TO MAKE, SOUTHEAST ASIA IN GENERAL AND THAILAND IN PARTICULAR, SIMPLY DO NOT REGISTER VERY HIGH IN OUR

CONCERNS. IN THE CONTEXT OF A WORLDWIDE TERMINATION, WE BELIEVE CESSATION OF GRANT AID WILL BE ACCEPTED WITH MUCH LESS GNASHING OF TEETH, ALTHOUGH THE THAI NO DOUBT WILL CONTINUE TO FEEL THAT WE SHOULD MAKE SOME SPECIAL CONCESSIONS TO THEM. LIKE THEIR ASEAN ASSOCIATES, THE THAI CONSIDER THAT THAILAND IS THE MOST EXPOSED TO A POTENTIAL THREAT OF AGGRESSION FROM VIET-NAM.

3. THERE HAS BEEN SOME PUBLIC PREPARATION HERE AS WELL AS THROUGH OUR INFORMAL CONTACTS WITH THAI OFFICIALDOM. THE AMBASSADOR HAS ADDRESSED THE ISSUE OF OUR OVERALL RELATIONSHIP WITH THAILAND THROUGH SPEECHES AND INTERVIEWS WITH THE PRESS. HE HAS STRESSED THAT U.S. TROOPS WOULD NOT BE RETURNED AND THAT THE SUBJECT HAS NOT EVEN BEEN RAISED. HE HAS ALSO INDICATED THAT THE U.S. WAS REDUCING ITS MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID TO THAILAND IN THE CONTEXT OF WORLDWIDE REDUCTIONS IN MILITARY SALES AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

4. IN SUM, WE FEEL A GOOD DEAL OF GROUNDWORK HAS GONE INTO "ADJUSTING" OUR HOST COUNTRY'S THINKING ON MAP. NEVERTHELESS, WE CAN EXPECT THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT MAP WILL TERMINATE AFTER FY 78 WILL BE AN UNWELCOME DASHING OF THAI HOPES, BUT THAT COULD NOT BE AVOIDED NO MATTER HOW MUCH LONGER WE "PREPARED" THEM FOR IT. THE REACTION PROBABLY WILL NOT BE MUCH WORSE NOW THAN LATER. IN THE CONTEXT OF A WORLDWIDE TERMINATION OF MAP, REPERCUSSIONS SHOULD BE MINIMAL AND WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONTAIN THE DAMAGE TO OUR RELATIONS.
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PAGE 03 BANGKO 05561 150518Z

THEREFORE, WE SEE NO PARTICULAR BENEFIT IN DELAYING SUCH ANNOUNCEMENT AND, ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT WANT TO BELABOR THE POINT, IT WILL BE A MUCH EASIER PILL FOR THE THAI TO SWALLOW IF IT IS CLEAR THAT TERMINATING MAP HERE IS PART OF A WORLDWIDE POLICY.

5. REFTEL DOES NOT RPT NOT MAKE CLEAR WHAT WILL BE TIMING OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN END TO GRANT MAP FOR INDONESIA AND THAILAND. PARA 2 INDICATES MATTER IS INCREASINGLY URGENT." COMING ON THE HEELS OF THE ANTICIPATED RELEASE OF THE DEPARTMENT'S REPORT ON CIVIL RIGHTS IN THAILAND AND THE PRESS ATTENTION GIVEN TO AMBASSADOR UNDERHILL'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF U.S. BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES, AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE END OF GRANT MAP MAY BE READ IN THAILAND AS PART OF A PATTERN OF U.S. "ABANDONMENT" OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. A DELAY OF A WEEK OR TWO IN THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE END TO GRANT MAP WOULD BE HELPFUL.

6. FOR ANSWERING THE INEVITABLE QUESTIONS ARISING FROM
THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT MAP TO THAILAND WILL BE TERMINATED
AFTER FY-78, IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE ASAP UP-TO-DATE
INFORMATION ON WHICH OTHER COUNTRIES WILL BE SIMILARLY
AFFECTED AND WHICH WILL OR ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO
RECEIVE GRANT ASSISTANCE BEYOND FY-78.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BANGKO05561
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770088-0177
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770360/aaaacae.tel
Line Count: 123
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cb3a7bb8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 55607
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3111987
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FUTURE OF GRANT MAP
TAGS: MASS, PFOR, TH
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cb3a7bb8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009